

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7918

INFO USLO PEKING

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SUVA 1735

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, FJ, CH

SUBJECT: THE PRIME MINISTER ON CHINA

1. HIS VISIT TO CHINA WAS A NATURAL SUBJECT TO COME UP IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER RATU MARA. SINCE A GREAT DEAL HAD ALREADY BEEN REPORTED ABOUT HIS OVERALL IMPRESSIONS OF CHINA, THE AMBASSADOR FOCUSSED ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT WHICH VERY LITTLE HAD BEEN WRITTEN:

A. ASSESSMENT OF THE PRC LEADERS: THE PRIME MINISTER WAS FORTHCOMING WITH PRAISE ABOUT THE "SHARPNESS, SERIOUSNESS, DEDICATION AND TENACITY" OF EVERYONE OF THE PRC LEADERS WITH WHOM HE CAME IN CONTACT EVEN IF A CAUSUAL ONE. HE THOUGHT THAT THIS COMPETENCE AT THE TOP AS PERHAPS THE REGIME'S GREATEST ASSET. HE BELIEVED THAT THE SELECTION PROCESS MUST BE FREER OF DOCTRINAL OR IDEOLOGICAL CRITERIA THAN IS GENERALLY ASSUMED TO ALLOW SUCH COMPETENCE TO EMERGE AT THE TOP ON SUCH A BROAD SCALE.

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B. WAR WITH RUSSIA. FROM PRESIDENT HUA DOWN EVERYONE OF THE PRC LEADERS SPOKE TO HIM OPENLY ABOUT SOVIET SCHEMES TO DOMINATE THE WORLD AND TO UNLEASH WAR. THIS PREOCCUPATION WITH WAR WITH RUSSIA WAS PERHAPS THE MOST FREQUENT THEME IN EVERY DISCUSSION AND ONE THAT WAS EXPLICITLY ARTICULATED WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST RESERVATION OR HESITATION.

C. IN FACT THE PRC LEADERS SENT SO FAR AS TO
DRAW A PARALLELEEN HITLER'S GERMANY AND THE SOVIET
UNION IN TERMS OF AGGRESSIVE MILITARISTIC DESIGNS TOWARDS
THE REST OF THE WORLD. THEY EXTENDED THIS ANALOGY FURTHER
BY INSISTING THAT ONLY BY STANDING UP TO THE RUSSIANS,
CHALLENGING THEM AT EVERY CORNER AND MAINTAINING SUPERIOR
MILITARY FORCES CAN WAR BE PREVENTED AND THE RUSSIANS
DESIGNS BE THWARTED. THE IMPLICIT WARNING WAS TO AVOID
THE ERROR OF THE APPEASEMENT APPROACH TOWARDS HITLER.
THE PM THOUGHT THAT CHAIRMAN HUA'S RECENT VISIT TO
RUMANIA, YUGOSLAVIA AND IRAN SHOULD BE SEEN AS DARING
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "STANDING-UP-TO-THEM STRATEGY"
THEY ARE ADVOCATING.

D. DECENTRALIZATION: THE PM WAS ALMOST LYRIC IN HIS
DESCRIPTION OF PRC'S SUCCESS IN DECENTRALIZING THE
GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY. HE LIKES TO MAKE THIS POINT BY
SAYING THAT THERE IS BY FAR MORE DECENTRALIZATION
IN COMMUNIST CHINA THAN IN DEMOCRATIC INDIA. (HE
STRESSED THIS TO A LARGE GROUP OF INDIAN FIJIANS DURING
THE FAREWELL RECEPTION BY INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION WHO
WAS ALSO PRESENT.) ASKED BY THE AMBASSADOR HOW HE
WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE HIMSELF THAT GOVERNMENTAL AND
PARTY AUTHORITY WAS INDEED DECENTRALIZED THE PM REPLIED
BY THE IMPRESSIVE RESULTS OF PRODUCTION, HE SAW,
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IN THE VILLAGES. YOU CANNOT GET THESE KIND OF RESULTS
WITHOUT DECENTRALIZED AUTHORITY" PHILOSOPHIZED THE PM.
MOTIVATION AND CAPACITY FOR LOCAL INITIATIVE DEPEND ON IT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SUVA 1735

E. PRC VIEWS ON FIJI'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE UK. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS STILL SMARTING WITH PRIDE BECAUSE HE HAD THE INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL COURAGE TO CHALLENGE THE PRC TOASTS IN WHICH CONSISTENTLY ALLEGATIONS WERE MADE ABOUT "COLONIAL EXPLOITATION BY UK AND FIJI'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE" BY POINTING OUT IN HIS OWN OFFICIAL TOAST THAT THIS CLICHE RHETORIC WAS OUT OF PLACE. RATU MARA HAD SAID THAT THE UK ADMINISTRATION FOR ALL ITS FAULTS BENEFITED FIJI, THERE WAS NEVER ANY STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND FIJI'S FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE UK CONTINUED AFTER INDEPENDENCE AND WILL CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE. THE PRIME MINISTER ANSWERED QUESTIONS BY SAYING THAT NONE OF THE PRC LEADERS EVER ATTEMPTED TO QUESTION HIS STATEMENTS OR EVEN TO BRING THEM UP IN CONVERSATIONS. IT WAS SIGNIFICANT, ALSO, THAT HIS TOAST WAS REPORTED EXTENSIVELY ON THE RADIO AND IN THE PRESS.

2. COMMENT: THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT ABOUT RATU MARA'S RIGHT TO TAKE PRIDE IN HIS REPLY TO THE PRC STANDARD
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MARXIST RHETORIC ABOUT COLONIALISM AND THE UK-FIJI RELATIONSHIP. HE ACTED IN THIS CONNECTION CONSISTENT WITH THE TRADITIONAL CHIEFTAIN'S RESPECT THAT HE HAS FOR THE TRUTH BUT ALSO WITH HIS SENSITIVITY TO ANY ATTEMPTS BY OUTSIDERS TO INTERPRET AND QUALIFY FIJIAN LIFE AND HISTORY.

3. HISRVATIONS ABOUT CHINA CAN BEST BE UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED IF ONE WERE TO BEAR IN MIND THE PM'S PREOCCUPATION WITH VILLAGE MOTIVATION AND INITIAITVE AS WELL AS CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED EFFORT OVER A RELATIVELY LONG TIME. THE EVIDENCE OF SUCH MOTIVATION REVEALED IN THE PRODUCTION RESULTS THAT HE SAW NOT ONLY IN CHINA BUT ALSO IN SOUTH KOREA CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH THE SIUTATION IN THE FIJIAN VOLLAGES WHERE AS A RULE THE VILLAGERS SEEM TO BE CONTENT WITH THE GIFTS OF A GENEROUS NATURE AND CLIMIATE.
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